

**Summary  
Historic Preservation in Florida  
Department of State Report  
To The  
Florida Legislature  
1980**

**George Firestone  
Secretary of State  
Florida Department of State**

**April 1980**

## SUMMARY

### **What is Historic Preservation?**

Historic preservation means the identification, protection, and beneficial use of the important archaeological, architectural, and historical resources of our past. It is a movement built on the firm foundation that the preservation of America's tangible historic resources gives dimension to the present and direction for the future, providing a sense of place and continuity for us all. However, historic preservation is a movement that requires a partnership among federal, state, and local levels with appropriate responsibilities at each level.

### **Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation**

Adaptive reuse and conservation of the nation's building stock have very real economic benefits. Rehabilitation projects generally take less capital to start and less time to complete than comparable new construction, tying up less money over a shorter period of time before the investor realizes a return. By their nature, restoration projects are labor intensive; they rely less on expensive heavy machinery and costly structural materials than does new construction.

Historic preservation also saves energy by taking advantage of that nonrecoverable energy already embodied in an existing building and extending the use of it. America's built environment truly represents a major investment in energy just as the coal and oil buried underground.

Historic preservation directly contributes to urban revitalization. In fact, the urban revitalization process often begins as a preservation related activity when the loss of a significant property or properties is threatened.

Historic preservation also complements the Presidential guidelines on Community Conservation which stress that public and private investment ought to build upon existing resources to the greatest extent possible in order to avoid unnecessary and costly duplication and waste. The objective of the President's Community Conservation policy is to encourage, through appropriate federal, state, and local actions, the targeting of limited resources on the redevelopment and/or development by the private sector of older commercial areas in cities, suburbs, and rural areas.

Historic preservation, needless to say, is not the answer to all of our economic and social problems, but it does contribute in very positive ways to a healthy economy and environment.

## **Department of State Recommendations for Reorganization of Historic Preservation Programs**

The Department of State finds that the present historic preservation programs in Florida have been effective for the areas they serve; however, a more effective and equitable system, in which all Floridians can participate, should be instituted by the Florida Legislature. The Department of State makes the following recommendations to the 1980 Florida Legislature.

### **State Historic Preservation Boards**

While the state Historic Preservation Boards are extremely effective in the areas where located and dramatically demonstrate the importance of local initiative, the continued proliferation of state boards is not politically realistic nor fiscally prudent. As presently constituted, the system invites continued appeals for additional boards that will further burden the state and leave unsolved the question of fostering local support and involvement in historic preservation throughout all areas of the state.

#### **Recommendation**

The Department of State recommends that the Florida Legislature pass enabling legislation to permit the creation of Historic Preservation and Conservation Authorities on a county basis if desired by local citizens. An equitable formula should be adopted to provide limited state matching funds to stimulate leverage of local monies, both public and private, and to improve opportunities to leverage federal historic preservation funds. The existing state Historic Preservation Boards of Tampa/Hillsborough County, Tallahassee, Boca Raton, Broward County, and Volusia/Flagler Counties should be recognized as the Historic Preservation and Conservation Authorities for their respective counties.

### **Division of Archives, History, and Records Management**

In view of the geography of Florida, the increasing workload requirements of the federal historic preservation programs, and the high cost of travel, it is becoming more difficult for a professional preservation staff based in Tallahassee to serve the entire state in a reasonable and timely manner. Access to professional expertise and services is vital to coordinate the needs of local citizens and communities with state and federal historic preservation programs. Obviously, state and federal programs can be effective only if these programs reach the people they are intended to serve.

#### **Recommendation**

Placement of professional preservation staff of the Division of Archives, History, and Records Management in the existing field offices of the Department of State will provide direct professional support ser-

vices at the local level to Historic Preservation and Conservation Authorities, local organizations, governments, and individuals. Department field offices are presently located in Pensacola, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, and Miami.

Preservation field staff would serve to educate and inform the public of the benefits of historic preservation programs; assist Historic Preservation and Conservation Authorities to start, grow, and remain viable; and assist local organizations and individuals with specific projects. Rather than add another layer of bureaucracy in state government, the addition of preservation field staff of the Division of Archives, History, and Records Management will encourage all Floridians to participate in state and federal programs and allow these programs to be responsive to local needs.

### **Museum and Interpretive Facilities**

Protection and enhancement of state owned resources of statewide and national significance are clearly the responsibility of state government. These resources form a part of the irreplaceable heritage of all Floridians. The State of Florida now owns historic museums or interpretive facilities, placed under the Department of State, in St. Augustine, Pensacola, Tallahassee, Key West, and White Springs which require careful management, operation, and maintenance to derive the maximum benefits for the public. These museums and properties are: *San Agustin Antiguo* in St. Augustine, the West Florida Museum of History in Pensacola, the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee, several historic structures in Key West, and the Florida Folklife Program in White Springs. At present each of these is administered by a different agency of the Department with the exception of the Folklife Program, which is administratively placed in the Office of the Secretary. There is no umbrella organization in the Department to address the specific needs of these historic museums and facilities.

### **Recommendation**

The Department of State finds that reorganization of the existing programs (*San Agustin Antiguo*, the West Florida Museum of History, the Historic Key West Museum, the Museum of Florida History, and the Florida Folklife Program) within a Division of Museums and Folk Culture will improve management and coordination of state services, eliminate overlapping activities, and be more responsive to the public. The creation of a Division of Museums and Folk Culture will differentiate between the museum and historic preservation programs of the Department placing each in a new perspective with appropriate sectors of responsibility for state and local efforts. It will also provide clear lines of authority and communication between the various museum entities



which do not now exist. Coordination of resources and of expertise and the elimination of duplicating activities will result in a more cost effective management of these programs. A coordinated marketing and publicity effort will create a higher level of visibility for these museums and increased tourist dollars.

It is the intent of the Department that the Preservation Boards in Pensacola, St. Augustine, and Key West be renamed Commissions, and that they retain legal standing and exercise direct supervision of present and future programs and policy decisions with regard to their respective museums. The current Trustees of the Historic Preservation Boards in St. Augustine, Key West, and Pensacola should serve out their terms as Commissioners and be eligible for reappointment to provide continuity and to ensure that the museums receive the maximum benefit of their knowledge and experience.

### **Florida's Historic 1902 Capitol**

In 1978 the Florida Legislature voted overwhelmingly to restore the Historic Capitol in its authentic 1902 form. This restoration of one of Florida's most historic buildings, now in progress, is the most visible and significant commitment ever made in any one Legislative session to historic preservation in the state; however, no decisions have been made to ensure that the restoration when completed will be maintained in perpetuity.

### **Recommendation**

The Department of State recommends that the Florida Historic Capitol be recognized as a unique building with special requirements for its use and care. Maintenance and custodial functions would remain with the Department of General Services subject to the special requirements of the building. It is the intent of the Department that the Historic 1902 Capitol function as a *living historical restoration*. The building should house within its walls museum exhibits, interpretive programs relating to Florida government and to the Historic Capitol, as well as appropriate state agencies carrying out the daily functions of government.